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(58) Field of Search

INT CL⁷ G06F

ONLINE: EPODOC, WPI, Internet, JAPIO

(54) Abstract Title

Internet/intranet data management system

(57) An Internet/Intranet Data Management system whereby form driven easily decipherable information is securely stored on a central server and is accessible, via Internet browser software, by all computer users with the requisite access privileges. This invention will allow computer users to leave messages, documents and pictures in a secure place where approved users can view and respond to them in a similar secure and structured manner.

An example of an application of the invention is in managing the data trail involved in making a claim against an existing insurance policy.

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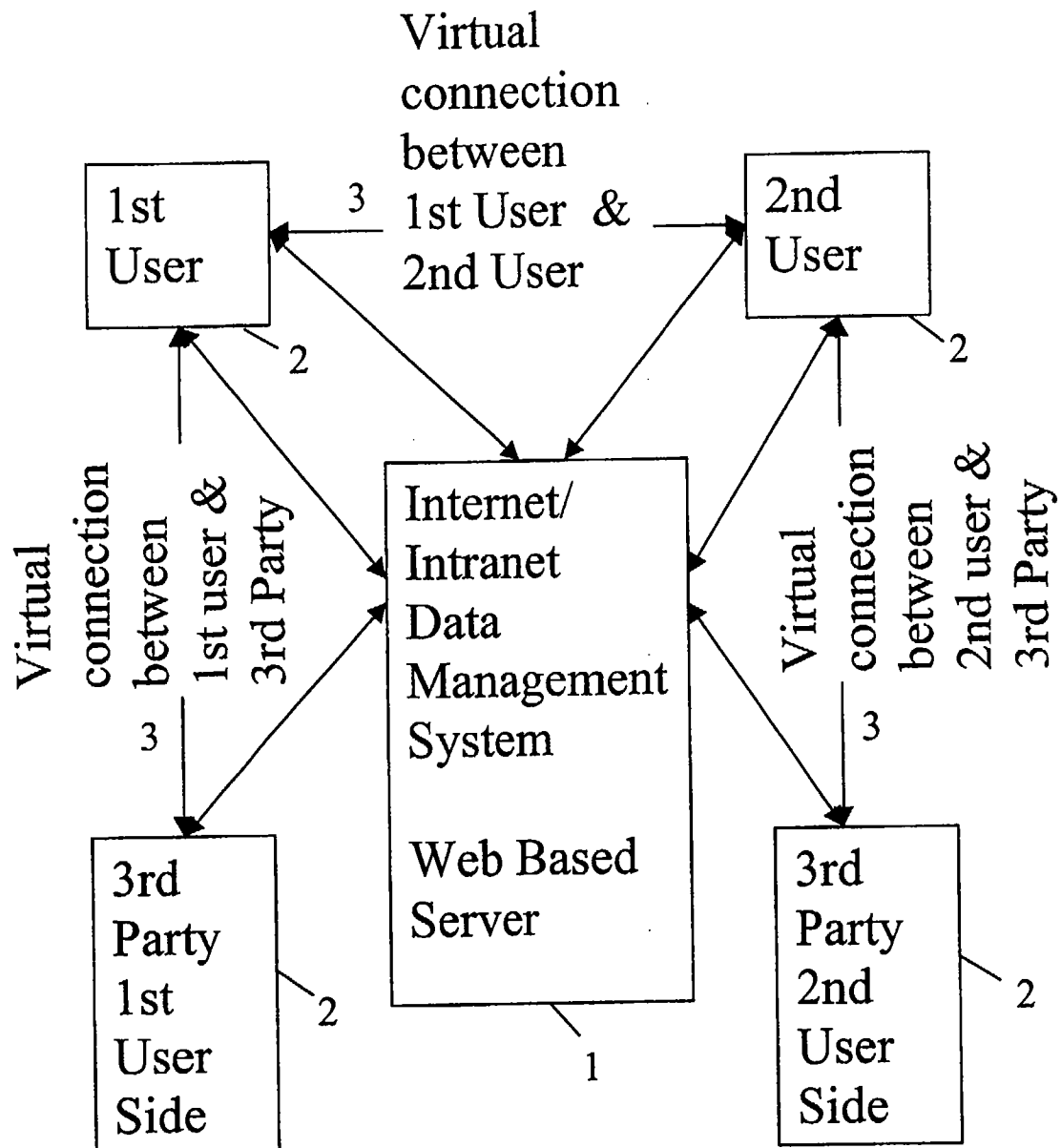


Fig 1

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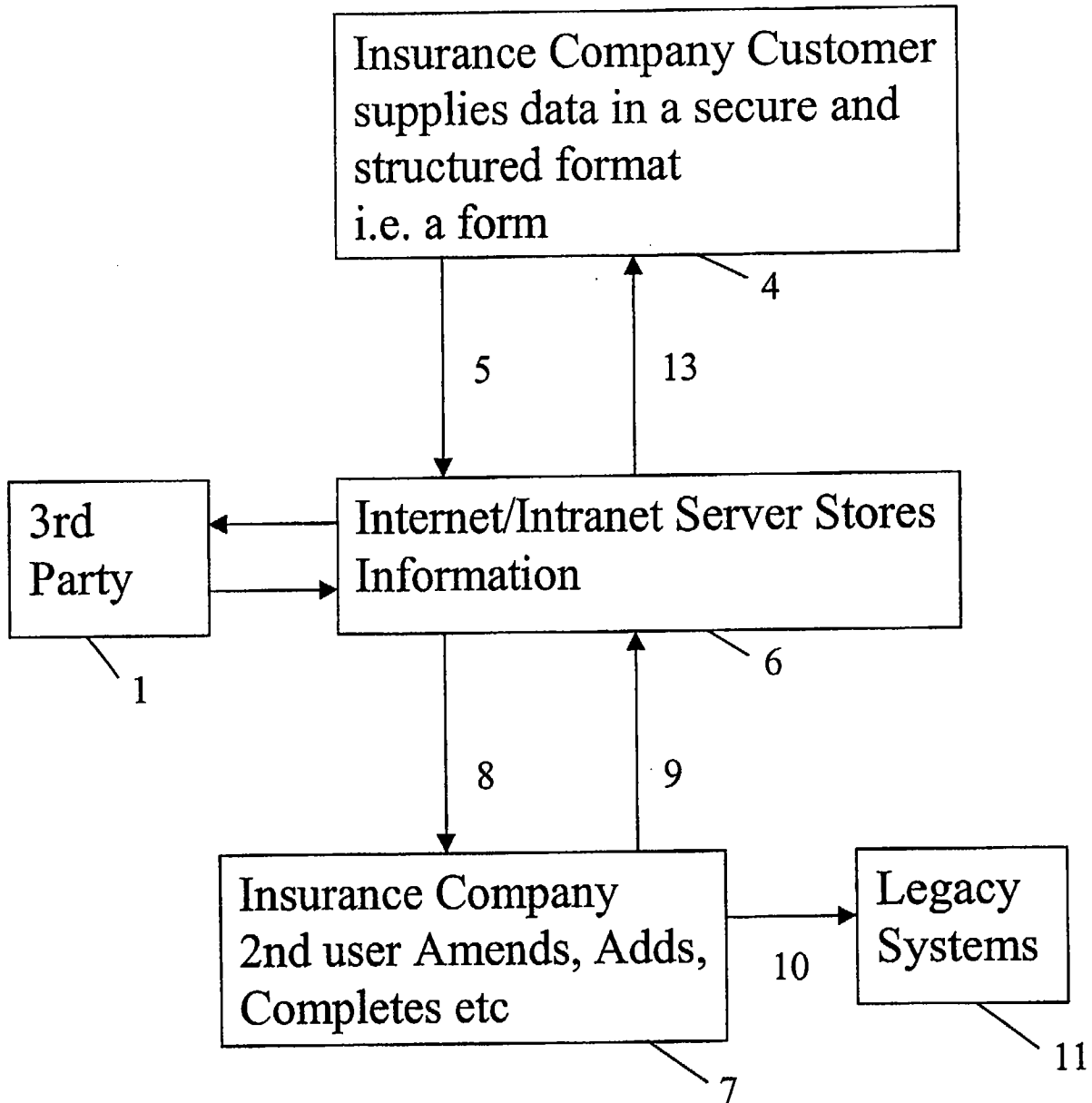


Fig 2

INTERNET/INTRANET DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This invention relates to an Internet/Intranet Data Management system that stores message text, images and documents which can be viewed and updated by computer users using an Internet browser.

Currently electronic mail is the accepted standard for the passage of information between computers. This system is well known but suffers in that message content is free format and therefore complete automated deciphering is impossible. Information distributed in this way is also open to theft and abuse as it passes through the Internet.

According to the present invention there is provided an Internet/intranet data management system comprising a server

that is accessible by users via the Internet/intranet,

that generates forms for a user to fill in and that stores data entered into the forms,

and

that allows the data to be viewed, amended, added to, completed and/or analysed electronically by users of two or more parties.

This invention provides a system whereby form driven information is stored on a central server and is accessible, via Internet browser software by all computer users with the requisite access privileges. This invention allows computers users to leave messages, documents and pictures in a secure place where approved users can view and respond to them in a similar secure and structured manner.

In this system the central server may be under the control of the provider of the data management system, which is a more secure method of transferring data between users than is email which makes use of third party servers; indeed for email even the identity of the servers relaying the messages is often unknown to the users.

The use of forms has the advantage of structuring the data allowing it to be deciphered automatically.

Preferably the users communicate with the server computer using Internet browser software. Further security may be provided by using an encrypted connection between the browser and the server.

Specific embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings of which :-

FIGURE 1 is a schematic diagram of a general example of the system.

FIGURE 2 shows the flow of data in a specific example of the system.

Figure 1 shows an Internet/intranet server, of the Internet/intranet Data Management System, where the information will be stored. User computer terminals 2 use Internet/intranet browser software. The server 1 generates forms which are transmitted to the terminals where they are displayed to the user by the browser software. When a user fills in a form the data supplied by the user is transmitted to the server 1 where it is stored in a database. Other users can retrieve information stored in the database, which again is presented to those users in forms displayed with an Internet browser. This procedure in effect establishes virtual links 3 between two or more parties accessing the same information yet maintains the information in an easily decipherable format, such as a form containing the fields, and in a secure environment.

The communication between the server and each browser is encrypted. Access to the system is restricted to those with security clearance, which the user proves when logging on to the system.

A more specific example of the system is shown in Figure 2 and is an application for an insurance company. Figure 2 demonstrates the flow of information. When a customer 4 of an insurance company wishes to claim against an existing policy, the customer 4

accesses 5 the Internet/Intranet Data Management System 6 via the Internet using browser software. Information is provided by the customer in a secure and structured format, such as a field containing form. The information is securely stored on the Internet/Intranet server 6. The insurance company 7 is notified 8 that the information has been sent by the customer and accesses the Internet/Intranet data Management System 3 via the Internet using browser software. The insurance company responds 9 to the claim by adding information to the form securely stored on the Internet/Intranet server 6. The insurance company may also download 10 the information to their existing legacy systems 11. Two way information flow between third parties 12, such as damage assessors, is also conducted via the Internet/Intranet server 6. At all times the customer can access 13 the Internet/Intranet server 6 and see how the claim is developing.

Further applications to which the Internet/Intranet Data Management System can be put include the following: complaints, refunds, cancellations, compensation, applications.

Complaints include, of course, those made by a customer. In, for example, a system according to the present invention for a local council, a resident may complain using the system to the council that a street lamp is not working. The council may instruct a contractor to fix the lamp, again using the system, and the resident may access the system to discover when the work is scheduled to take place.

Refunds arise, for example, when goods are returned. In an example of a system according to the present invention for refunds, the customer may use the system to notify the supplier that the goods are being returned, the warehouse logs the arrival of the goods in the system and the user can monitor the system for both that arrival and the issue of the refund.

Similarly the present invention can be applied to cancellations. In an example system, a customer can notify a supplier of the cancellation of a telephone contract. The supplier then works out the last date of the telephone service being supplied and leaves a message for an engineer to disconnect it on that day - the user can then find out what that day is

and also the final amount owing which has also been added to the system by the telephone supplier.

Compensation can arise *inter alia* under a contract or as a result of an injury. In an example of the system for the latter the user initiates a claim by filling in a form and sending it to the central server of a compensation claims agent, which server then handles subsequent messages between the agent, solicitors, doctors, insurers and other interested parties.

Applications may be made for all sorts of things including membership of a club or a licence to put a skip on the highway. In an exemplary system for the former, the would-be member submits an electronic form to the central server, existing members comment on the application by sending in further forms, the committee then decide on membership and post a form accepting or declining the application, and if it is acceptance this is noted by the membership secretary and the applicant on interrogating the system.

The central server described above may in its implementation be divided into three modules, which may be run on the same or different server computers in communication with each other. Those modules are a web server for sending and receiving forms to and from the users' Internet browsers, a business logic server for deciding what actions to take and a database server for storing on disc the information provided by the users. The web server may be, for example, Apache or Microsoft's Internet Information Server. The database server may be for example Oracle or Microsoft's SQL Server. The business logic server may be written in a general purpose programming language and communicates with the web server and the database server.

Claims:

1. An Internet/intranet data management system comprising a server
that is accessible by users via the Internet/intranet,
that generates forms for a user to fill in and that stores data entered into the forms,
and
that allows the data to be viewed, amended, added to, completed and/or analysed
electronically by users of two or more parties.
2. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in claim 1 arranged to
transmit the forms to the users using encryption.
3. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, wherein
the system comprises terminals connected to receive the forms via the Internet/intranet
for displaying the forms to the users and transmitting to the data entered into the forms
back to the server computer.
4. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in claim 3 arranged to
transmit the data from the terminals back to the server using encryption.
5. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in claim 3 or claim 4 wherein
at least one of the terminals is a computer arranged to display the forms using Internet
browser software.
6. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any preceding claim
wherein the server comprises a web server for transmitting the forms to the users.
7. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any preceding claim
wherein the server comprises a database server for storing the data provided by the users.

8. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the server comprises business logic server for deciding the actions taken by the system.
9. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any preceding claim arranged to manage the data arising from a claim against an existing insurance policy.
10. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8, arranged to manage the data arising from a complaint.
11. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8, arranged to manage the data arising from a refund.
12. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8, arranged to manage the data arising from a cancellation.
13. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8, arranged to manage the data arising from a compensation claim.
14. An Internet/intranet data management system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8, arranged to manage the data arising from an application.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Claims searched: 1-14

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Examiner: Phil Osman
Date of search: 1 May 2002

Patents Act 1977 Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.T):

Int Cl (Ed.7): G06F

Other: Online: EPODOC, Internet, JAPIO, WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X	WO 00/67173 A1 (ZIRMED.COM) See page 2 line 12 - page 3 line 15 and page 11 lines 8 - 16.	1-14
X	WO 99/12539 A1 (COLLEGENET) See page 13 line 1 - page 14 line 10.	1-14
X	US 5,930,759 (SYMBOL TECHNOLOGIES) See Abstract	1-14
X	US 5,570,291 (WALLACE COMPUTER SERVICES) See Abstract & column 5 lines 29-34.	1-14
X	'1978: The First Computer Bulletin Board System, CBBS, Goes Online' at http://www.historyoftheinternet.com/chap3.html	1
X	'Auctioning Intellectual Property Online' Chartland S, New York Times, Aug 9 th 1999.	1-14

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.

A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
E Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier